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AUTHOR Audley, Barbara; Thompson, Ann McKay
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ABSTRACT

This report describes an educational partnership between South Dakota State University and Capital University Center, Inc. (CUC), (Pierre, South Dakota). CUC is a nonprofit organization founded in 1982 to provide access to higher education for residents of rural central South Dakota. CUC contracts with South Dakota State University for educational programs and provides on-site management services, equipment, facilities, and marketing. An educational grant allowed this partnership to expand and include two other universities in providing associate degree programs (nursing and business), short-term training opportunities, and development of adjunct faculty skills. Higher education services have been provided to 3,237 students, 25 hospitals and nursing homes, and numerous businesses and agencies throughout 86 communities in central South Dakota. Features of this approach include comparatively low costs for instruction and administration; use of highly qualified local individuals as adjunct faculty; marketing approach to education; tailoring of programs based on adult learner needs; joint use of facilities; education as an integral part of economic development; and ongoing evaluation. This partnership has continued to grow in response to community needs and has proven to be cost effective in providing higher education and promoting rural economic development. (LP)

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ED 363 463

UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: ACCESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA

PROJECT SUMMARY

Rural economic development requires a partnership between an entire community and higher education. Through the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education grant, "Facilitating Economic Change in Central South Dakota," the partnership was expanded to introduce two associate degree programs, short-term training opportunities, and development of adjunct faculty skills and expertise. Addressing the needs of rural citizens some 200 miles from a public institution, results of the project include degree programs in place, degrees awarded, certificate programs in place meeting local needs, a model for development of other content areas, institutionalized community and higher education efforts and support, and a cadre of trained, qualified adjunct faculty who provide instruction on site.

Barbara Audley, Director
Lifelong Learning & Outreach
South Dakota State University
Box 2218
Brookings, SD 57007-0599
605-688-5193

Ann McKay Thompson, President
Capital University Center, Inc.
809 East Dakota
Pierre, SD 57501
605-224-6131

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UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP:
ACCESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The capital city of Pierre, SD, is located in the center of South Dakota, some 200 miles or 4 hours driving from any public higher education institution in the state. A small private institution closed its Pierre campus around 1883. With the exception of occasional 'extension' classes, higher education was not available to central South Dakotans unless they were willing to move or could commute, neither of which was a real choice.

In the early 1980s, Pierre and the surrounding central region of the state were experiencing a significant economic downturn. It became evident to community leaders that growth or even survival in the rural areas was dependent on local citizens taking their future into their own hands. One void in the chain of economic development needed to be corrected.

Permanent access to post-secondary education had to be established if growth and diversification of industry were to occur. In addition, area people needed to have the major role in determining what education should be offered so individual as well as business, government and organization needs could be met.

B. BACKGROUND

In 1982, a group of Pierre citizens organized the Capital University Center, Inc. (CUC), a not-for-profit corporation and endowed it with $60,000. The group decided not to become a private college or to request a branch campus of the state system but to contract with an existing institution for the offerings the area needed and to have a central location where residents could learn about and register for any post-secondary offerings. That partnership model, expanded to include 2 other institutions, is the same one working today. It is a model that allows a rural region to determine and obtain needed education from the college best able to serve the needs.

In the beginning only discrete courses were offered. In 1983, after joining with South Dakota State University (SDSU), Brookings, some 200 miles to the east, a more programmatic approach was adopted. Two types of offerings were provided: the general education core of most bachelor's degrees and special interest offerings. Both needs were developed as a result of marketing studies of area residents.

C. PURPOSE

The next needs that surfaced, again based on marketing studies, were for (1) a business associate degree, (2) a nursing associate degree,

and (3) certificate programs and non-credit training for business and industry. With the help of the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), these programs were put in place. Two other South Dakota universities are providing the degree areas; SDSU is doing the general education courses that support both degrees. The first graduations from the business and nursing programs have occurred.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/STRATEGIES

Basic to the model from the very beginning was the use of local program determination, local facilities, local coordination/management, local faculty and a center approach which coordinates and makes known all post-secondary programs offered to residents of the region. This proved very adequate as there is a pool of state government personnel who are highly trained and degreed who can provide the level of courses necessary for these programs. ' ith the advent of the nursing program, on-campus faculty had to be brought to Pierre at great expense. The local center is also responsible for the financing of activities.

E. RESULTS

All project initiatives were completed and are fully operational and institutionalized.

In the process of the past eight (8) years the leadership of both SDSU and CUC has discovered many important points for persons who wish to implement this model, including but not limited to, the need for total community involvement and commitment as the most effective and efficient way for a rural area to accomplish this type of venture, the need for expertise on the part of the academic institution in off-campus delivery, the high level of trust necessary between partners, the use of the marketing approach, viewing the total venture as a business, the use of adult learning principles and techniques and training of instructors, and to a rather minor discovery, the need for telecommunications instructors to visit the off-campus site very early in the class to maximize the learning experience.

F. CONTINUATION

Plans are now underway to bring the final 2 years of a bachelor's degree to Pierre. This degree, a bachelor of science in general studies, has the capability of being individualized, so courses can be planned that will maximize the resources of Pierre but still present a cogent plan of study. The plan will build on the 2-year associate in business degree.

Early on the awareness emerged that for upper division work, on-campus faculty would have to be involved to a much greater degree than they had been previously. Time and travel expense would be a major factor in accomplishing this delivery. The cost of air charter, the only viable means to provide weekly classes, exceeds the cost of the faculty compensation by almost a factor of 2. In summer 1990 South Dakota

Public Broadcasting unexpectedly volunteered its back-up microwave path between SDSU and Pierre for educational uses provided SDSU and CUC could create the special classrooms needed. On October 4, 1990, the first session of the first class was aired.

For further information contact

Dr. Barbara Audley
Director
Division of Lifelong Learning & Outreach
Box 2218
Brookings, SD 57007
605/688-5193

Ann McKay Thompson
President
Capital University Center, Inc.
809 E. Dakota
Pierre, SD 57501
605/224-6131

UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP:
ACCESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

A key issue today for rural communities in middle America is economic survival. Because of a declining agricultural economy, other efforts to diversify the rural economic base must be found.

Experience in urban communities has shown that partnerships between industry and education are effective in addressing the economic needs of an area. But in rural regions a partnership between education and the entire community is the only viable alternative, since large industry is practically non-existent.

Prior to the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education grant, progress had already been made between community and education through the five-year partnership of South Dakota State University (SDSU) and Capital University Center (CUC), located 200 miles from the SDSU campus.

Capital University Center (CUC) is a community founded and supported non-profit corporation which determines educational needs in central South Dakota, contracts with the post-secondary institutions for those offerings, and provides on-site management services, equipment, facilities and marketing.

Discrete courses had been offered but needs for degree and certificate programs had been identified if economic change was to occur for the central part of South Dakota.

The Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education grant award enhanced the ability of this proven partnership model to proceed with the following identified initiatives to support new economic development efforts:

1. Implement an associate degree in business management and certificate and short-term programs to meet employer/ employee needs.

2. Implement an associate degree in nursing to provide upward mobility for licensed practical nurses and to address the nursing shortage in central South Dakota.

3. Implement faculty development for resident adjunct staff to provide opportunities and resources for Pierre-based staff to enhance instructional skills, effectiveness and motivation.

The following results were achieved:

1. Potential negative economic impacts of increased health costs and severe nursing personal shortages were diverted by instituting an associate degree in nursing at Capital University Center.

2. Diversifying the regional economy and increasing personal income has begun through developing a cadre of individuals with business knowledge provided by the associate degree in business implemented on site.

3. Business non-credit programs have been instituted which address subject matter geared to audiences' needs for specific information to remain licensed or to improve community development and business expertise. Based on market research, non-credit/certificate programs in leadership, customer service, management, supervision, microcomputer applications, child care worker licensure, and entrepreneurship, among others, were offered and continue.

4. A model for delivery of programs has been expanded to include two other South Dakota public higher education institutions, Northern State University (NSU) and the University of South Dakota (USD).

5. A cadre of over 400 adjunct faculty who meet the academic qualifications and rigor of the several post-secondary institutions were identified and trained in adult learning theory, methods and approaches as well as university academic policies and procedures.

6. The processes and procedures necessary to implement both credit and non-credit programs were identified and models now exist to facilitate future implementation of similar programs.

7. Services have been provided to 3,237 semester enrollees, 25 hospitals and nursing homes, numerous adult businesses, and agencies throughout 86 communities in central South Dakota, either through discrete enrollment or group contract.

8. All FIPSE initiatives were completed and institutionalized with adequate funding, staffing and physical housing.

9. Two outcomes for future action were revealed, one of which has already been addressed. First, the development of the associate degree in nursing for Licensed Practical Nurses provided data that indicated the need for a generic 2 year nursing program, to which we were able to

respond. State-funding was secured for that program with implementation occurring in 1990. Secondly, the lack of local faculty resources for advanced upper division and graduate offerings became apparent. Future higher level degree programs will require direct faculty involvement from campus via interactive television conducted in a teaching style conducive to adult learning needs.

B. THE PROBLEM/PURPOSE

The key issue today for rural communities in middle America is, and remains, economic survival. With the decline in farming and ranching, many communities are facing severe economic catastrophe because of the lack of another economic base to protect them. South Dakota, as the most agricultural state in the nation, is no different.

Community leaders in South Dakota indicate that post-secondary education is one of the most important contributing factors to future economic growth and continued economic survival. Specifically, the problem in rural areas like South Dakota is not only the maintenance of an available labor force but also the assurance that adequate education/training is provided so current job holders can perform new functions required as organizations change, competition becomes more technological and firms shrink in size to compete more effectively.

For someone wishing to replicate the model from which this project is based, we would recommend:

1. Have clear goals in mind before embarking on any activities.

2. Have marketing studies and conclusions behind each initiative so there is a high potential for success. The model demands operating education programs like a business.

3. Establish partnership networks and commitments. Then make systematic use of those networks if the cooperative effort is to succeed.

4. Monitor progress in a systematic way so a change in course will take place if needed to get to desired results.

The features of our model that can have applicability in other locales include:

1. Cooperative arrangements by higher education institutions with locally-based organizations such as Capital University Center.

2. Comparatively low costs for instruction and administration.

3. Use of highly qualified local individuals as adjunct faculty who are specifically trained for adult student classes.

4. Marketing approach to education.

5. Customization of programs based on adult learner needs and distance both for credit and non-credit delivery.

6. Joint use of facilities.

7. Education as an integral part of economic development.

8. Procedures, policies, and methods needed to carry out such endeavors.

To assure this adequate, trained labor force, several major needs were identified. The responses to these needs complemented the economic development focus initiated by the Governor of South Dakota. Furthermore, these responses had to be initiated without investment of state and local funds which were not available.

The problem was straightforward. Pierre, the capital of South Dakota, is in the center of the state with a 60 mile radius trade area representing one-third of South Dakota's land mass. It is approximately 200 miles from any public higher education or other post-secondary institution. Even if there had been an institution available, no one institution has all the programs or all the content areas that would be needed to respond to educational needs. There was also no money to provide educational services to another location since campus outreach must be self-supporting. If one were to provide educational services through extension, the costs and time involved with traveling faculty and the great distances of South Dakota made any offering highly expensive, such that would have raised the cost to the student to a prohibitive level. In addition, no one of the six state universities was aware of the educational and professional needs of the residents in the central South Dakota area. Nor was there any effort to coordinate occasional offerings where the public was appropriately informed of the opportunities and where duplication was avoided. That was one of the very reasons Capital University Center was formed, so marketing analyses could be conducted to meet needs surfacing from the grassroots.

Finally, the group of residents most in need of post-secondary education were adults who are home and job bound but still required on-going educational delivery services for effective job performance. It was imperative that the delivery of programming include efficient and effective support staff at Pierre to monitor and respond to unusual

and unforeseen circumstances, to support faculty and to provide student services.

Looking back over the activities of the last three years, the needs as identified earlier have not changed. The need for a trained work force at a distant location with adequate and appropriate support services still exists. The cost-effective model which was used in this particular situation of partnerships, with both the academic institution and the local community organization sharing responsibility for the quality and effective delivery of that programming, is still viable. Over time, we have become much more sophisticated in responding to requests for and delivery of services; that sophistication will stand us in good stead for future program development initiatives.

C. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS

The state of South Dakota is characterized by great distances, a sparse but hardworking population, scarce resources and a growing need for educational services at the post-secondary level. Unfortunately, the higher education institutions are clustered at either end of the state. Thus, for the central portion of South Dakota, post-secondary services are either not a realistic expectation or require much travel. This represents nearly 26,000 square miles (approximately one-third the state land mass) with a population of 80,000 which was seriously underserved by post-secondary education.

For years, local residents in Central South Dakota had talked about the need for some type of consistent, quality higher education opportunities in their area. Over the last 100 years, various South Dakota colleges and universities had tried to deliver an array of extension courses but without full programmatic continuity and on-site staff. In addition, business and government within Central South Dakota had no low-cost, dependable, quality programs to help them with business expansion or training.

With the above in mind, numerous citizens and organizations came together to propose and find a way for Pierre to contract with existing colleges and universities to offer quality education at a reasonable cost based on local needs. That effort resulted in the formation of Capital University Center, Inc., in April, 1982, by 250 founders donating money for start-up costs and governed by a 12 member Board of Directors whose members range from the top assistant to the Governor of South Dakota to prominent business people in state and local government as well as the community. The philosophy from the beginning was one of cooperation and partnership between and among Pierre, its surrounding residents, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Corporation, the city commission, school district and South Dakota's colleges and universities. South Dakota State University was chosen as the host institution because of its commitment to outreach and its extensive, practical experience in that area. In 1983 the State Board of

Regents specifically approved the cooperative agreement between CUC and SDSU.

Prior to receiving the FIPSE grant, only discrete courses had been offered through CUC by South Dakota State University since 1983 and by the University of South Dakota during one year in 1982.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/PLANNING STRATEGIES

There were three main initiatives of the project.

1. To provide business and industry training and degree programs at the associate degree level.

2. To provide an associate degree in nursing for licensed professional nurse (LPN) upward mobilists.

3. To enhance the effectiveness of the adjunct faculty who would be teaching many of the classes that would be offered under this activity.

Key strategies included the fact that the programs were in response to market surveys which indicated specific needs, that local faculty would be used wherever possible, assuming they met the academic qualifications of the sponsoring academic institution, and the use of local fund raising activities to augment the revenue generated by enrollment so as to keep the cost to the students as manageable as possible.

The first phase of the three-year grant was spent in doing the ground work to bring the degree programs to Pierre, with one existing staff person and several part-time employees working to help facilitate that goal. An additional person was hired to work on the non-credit activities. An interesting result of that occurrence and the first of several non-credit programs was the fact that demand immediately increased for services, leading to a decision that service response had to be prioritized because there was more to do than could be done with the resources available.

Another interesting component was the expansion of the model partnership with the inclusion of two additional South Dakota public post-secondary institutions, Northern State University (NSU), which brought the associate degree in business administration, and the University of South Dakota (USD), which contributed the associate degree in nursing. For both degree programs, South Dakota State University would continue to offer the support courses which were in place from previous years, thus avoiding duplication of effort and dilution of enrollment.

The major strategy used for this activity was establishing an effective chain of command and a communication link with all interested parties. All searches for new partners included initial and continued contact with the chief executive officer of each university to explore

potential institutional commitment and ability to deliver services to central South Dakota. Each university president later brought other staff into the discussions, but all major decisions were kept at the highest level. The communication link was also important to establish within each institution so the various levels of authority were in concert with the over-all philosophy and method of implementation which was unique to most participants. Regular reporting to the South Dakota Board of Regents and the Board of Capital University Center was standard operating procedure. Constant networking and updating occurred with local groups in central South Dakota to assure users of the service that progress was being made.

During the second and third years of the project, extensive implementation strategies were developed and carried out. "Attention to the details" was the common theme.

Intensive marketing and advertising for all offerings was an integral part of the strategy as well. Beside using direct mail and display advertising, in-person meetings with students and public relations events were scheduled. Evaluation procedures were also implemented on a systematic basis for quality control and adjustments to the project were made promptly to meet institutional expectations and student needs.

One of the hallmarks of this particular model and implementation phase was the inclusion of many community agencies both through membership on the Board of Directors of CUC and through solicitation of funds. This approach was continued both in terms of financial donations received and in terms of the feeling of ownership that the community of Pierre and central South Dakota held for the CUC operation.

The FIPSE initiative to establish a degree in nursing became extremely complex. It required a search for a new university partner which had the authority to deliver such a degree and meticulously developing procedures for delivery and approval. It also involved state legislative action to provide a subsidy required to implement a quality program off campus. And finally, access to nursing education throughout the state fluctuated between a partisan and bi-partisan issue in the legislature where the proposed program was placed in the political arena. For those wishing to duplicate our project, we highly recommend not giving up or avoiding the reality of political considerations for a worth-while project. One of the characteristics of our model is to have a strong marketing and network approach resulting in grassroots needs information well supported by cooperating groups. This feature will serve as the basic building block to progress.

E. PROJECT RESULTS

On-going evaluation was an integral part of this project. The first year, as a year mainly dealing with process as opposed to extensive delivery of programming, was reviewed on-site by outside evaluator, Dr. Roger McCannon, University of Minnesota, Morris, in terms of the

effectiveness of the process and the appropriateness of the steps taken. Dr. McCannon met with administration, staff, students and community leaders. He found the project had met all time lines, goals and appropriate steps. During this same year in-house tracking systems, policy manuals, quality control instruments for class evaluation (see evaluation report) and faculty performance, and data base management were put in place.

The second and third year were implementation years. Evaluation design included both numerical and anecdotal information. The plan was discussed with FIPSE staff for meeting project requirements as well as effectiveness measures.

All FIPSE project initiatives are fully completed and institutionalized with adequate funding, staffing and housing.

Both associate degree programs are in place and operational. The first graduates of the business and nursing programs were in 1990. Many non-credit and certificate programs have been designed and implemented, some for one-time applications and some for continuing implementation. The non-credit system is fully in place as is the faculty training component.

Data are available which discuss number of offerings, both credit and non-credit, number of students who participated, number of class slots that were filled, number of graduates, etc.

Included is a summary of a detailed report on this type of information which is available for review if desired. Anecdotal comments by CUC students as part of the on-going evaluation of all classes offered by CUC indicated that the students are very pleased that this learning opportunity is available to them, they see the programs and/or courses as being important to their future well-being and also as not being possible in any other fashion that doing this through an agency such as CUC.

A major project result is that all contracts, policies and systems are in place for

a. Academic rigor
b. Full range of student services, advising and orientation
c. Curriculum development
d. Facilities use and physical site logistics
e. Faculty approval
f. Faculty training
g. Evaluation of faculty and programming
h. Library resources
i. Administrative support services
j. Marketing and promotion
k. Student record keeping and tracking

One interesting outcome of the project was that the need for a generic or "from scratch" nursing program was identified. Through the hard work of USD and CUC, who represented over 25 hospitals and nursing homes, state appropriated funding to implement that program was acquired from the 1990 South Dakota Legislature. Thus, the first class of generic nursing students began their studies in the fall of 1990. State funding is now a regular part of the budget of USD for delivery of the generic nursing program in Pierre and the SDSU support courses needed for the degree are underwritten by the hospital in Pierre. All other initiatives are 80 percent self-supporting with local agencies committed to providing the remainder of the needed funds.

Now that the associate level has been achieved, there is growing interest in earning the second half of the four year degree. Work has begun and funding explored to provide the upper division level of baccalaureate study, building on the expertise already in place but addressing the unique problems of higher level, content-intensive instruction directly from the campus and modified for the adult learner.

Originally, we had expectations of minimal outside fiscal support to assist us during the grant period. However, we did expect to receive strong non-financial backing from local organizations and internal financing by the current partnership. As we expanded the network of interested parties, unexpected developments began to happen.

The community hospital offered CUC the use of their medical library and permanent free housing for all local administration offices and daytime classroom space. An entire floor of the hospital education wing was refurbished and devoted exclusively for CUC use to implement the FIPSE project.

The local School Board reconfirmed the free use of all of their modern laboratories and classroom space but went a step further. They joined with state government and CUC to pool monies to implement a $175,000 state-of-the-art computer lab in preparation for certificate and degree programs in the FIPSE initiative. The school uses it in the mornings, state government in the afternoons and CUC at night and on weekends.

The office of the Governor of South Dakota also provided unexpected outside support. When it became apparent that the development of a nursing program for central South Dakota would be more complex than originally anticipated, the Governor provided monies for travel needed to coordinate with all the universities, boards, hospitals and nursing homes involved, so the effort would not be halted at a critical time.

The final bonus of outside support came near the end of the FIPSE grant period. South Dakota Public Television offered its backup transmission line from Pierre to SDSU to operate an interactive television link at the CUC location as a demonstration in using the technology.

Within a three-month period, the partnership financed classroom studios at SDSU and CUC, and Public TV technicians modified the system for operation. What was originally meant to be the first demonstration college course ended up being a critical class. We could find no local instructor to teach a particular course needed by nurses to graduate under the FIPSE initiative. By presenting the SDSU on-campus class in both Brookings and Pierre simultaneously over the link, the nurses were able to complete their degrees. This outside support windfall, valued at over $500,000, occurred because the partnership model was in place and effectively operational.

The following is a partial listing of other significant findings and results of the project model:

1. The model is cost effective to the student. Cost comparisons show that the typical CUC employed student attending as part-time would need to (conservatively) spend $2,317.93 per semester at SDSU compared to $584.00 at the CUC location. Loss of students' incomes would also add to the fiscal impact if they could not continue to work.

2. The model is cost effective in operations. It costs 19 to 35% less per credit hour to deliver courses at CUC than on the three partnership campuses. These significant percentages are due mainly to the features of the model which use local adjunct rather than traveling faculty and which make nearly rent-free use of local existing facilities or cooperative use of buildings at the Pierre location.

3. The model is effective for adult students who would not otherwise have an opportunity for post-secondary education. Based on 1990 student survey data, only 10% (72 individuals) of the 1,267 enrollees at CUC would leave central South Dakota to complete a degree on a campus.

4. Academic quality is achievable at an off-campus site. The associate degree program in nursing from USD at CUC received full approval by the South Dakota Board of Nursing on February 26, 1990. The on-site and observation evaluation report indicated full compliance in the areas of purpose and objectives, faculty organization, curriculum, curriculum implementation, educational facilities, personnel, student welfare and services, annual reports, and board survey. Also, during the grant period, the program received the maximum accreditation by the National League of Nursing (January 28, 1991).

   The associate business degree program has not had a national accreditation visit, but on-campus staff have documented that adjunct faculty appointments and course content have met requirements equal to those on campus.

All other policies and procedures are in place and meet requirements.

Both SDSU and USD were visited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools as part of their regular accreditation process. At SDSU outreach policies, procedures, and operations at all sites were rated as "exemplary." Both universities received 10 year accreditations.

In addition, adjunct faculty-student ratings were above average. A 1990 survey of 35 active SDSU adjunct faculty provided the following information taken from student evaluations. Evaluation is based on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor). Faculty performance (instruction, organization, and content) average 1.55. Subject content averaged 1.84.

5. One of the recurring points of information that continues to be obvious is the fact that some post-secondary institutions have expertise in delivering programming off campus that can facilitate the type of activity that this grant funded. Those institutions with that type of expertise will be much more efficient and effective in delivering programs and fulfilling central South Dakota goals and objectives. Thus, it is important for persons or agencies who wish to bring about off-campus delivery of credit or non-credit courses for their own agency to investigate carefully the expertise of the academic partner before beginning work on any given project.

F. CONTINUATION AND DISSEMINATION

CUC will continue its partnership with its three academic co-partners. CUC is also interested in bringing the upper division baccalaureate and master's level courses to Pierre so that its students may continue to achieve their educational goals. CUC is interested in embarking on delivery services by two-way interactive telecommunications and is currently seeking funding for both the equipment and professional expertise to facilitate that goal.

SDSU is also interested in telecommunications delivery and will be working with CUC, as well as other interested agencies, to facilitate a state-wide network for that type of delivery, one location of which will be CUC.

Much dissemination has already occurred, including an international journal article. The project co-directors will be presenting a paper at the National Rural Education Initiatives Conference on June 21, 1991, in Kansas City, MO, describing the project, its initiatives and its results. Thousands of brochures and pamphlets continue to be distributed and requests for information on our model remain steady.

G. FINAL NOTE

The impact of a very intangible quality of this project's success should be high-lighted. The major players of CUC and SDSU exhibited and felt a great deal of mutual trust and understanding during the performance of project activities. A commitment to the goals of the project and creative problem-solving overrode the traditional "turf" orientations of competing agencies. Thus, actions of any partner were viewed in a positive light, as each partner having the good of the project and its various members at heart, rather than adopting a much more adversarial stance. Many years of working together probably helped generate this mutual understanding, but the project co-directors strongly believe that this intangible was instrumental in the successful completion of the FIPSE project. We continue to experience success as new partners display trust and are added to the project. The other quality which was evident to the success of our endeavor was that the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education staff was always available for quality advice and counsel. The mission of the Fund allowed for the kind of innovation necessary for us to develop a unique model for higher education in rural areas. And finally, the Fund's investment in our project has resulted in high return as all initiatives were completely institutionalized and expanded on a permanent basis.

H. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Supporting materials are available for review from the project directors and include the following: project completion documentation, dissemination materials, detailed students evaluations and studies, all implementation methodologies, all outside evaluator reports, and all fiscal reports. A full copy of these materials has been provided to the FIPSE office in Washington, D.C.